

Partnerships, Suppliers And Coercive Influence


Stephane Bignoux, Middlesex University, United Kingdom
David Gray, Macquarie University, Australia

ABSTRACT

This paper adapts intra-firm influence strategies to an inter-firm context. In the process it retests the link between coercive influence strategies and supplier performance. Qualitative data is drawn from interviews conducted with informants in the Australian Recruitment Industry. In line with expectations, the study shows that intra-firm influence strategies are adaptable to an inter-firm context. Contrary to predictions, the study finds that suppliers use frequent checking and persistent reminders (pressure strategy), benefits and favors (exchange strategy), form coalitions with other suppliers and buyer managers (coalition strategy) and go over a buyer manager's head (upward appeals) to improve their performance in partnerships. These findings suggest that suppliers use a wider set of influence strategies than previously reported in the literature. In short, influence strategies are more heterogeneous than previously implied in the literature.

Keywords: Partnerships; Suppliers; Influence

INTRODUCTION

his study responds to a call by inter-firm influence scholars to identify influence strategies found in other contexts and to apply these to the study of influence at inter-firm level (see Boyle *et al.*, 1992). The aim of this adaptation is to provide a unique perspective on the application of influence between firms.

As Table 1 shows, most inter-firm influence studies investigate influence using the six influence strategies devised by Frazier and Summers (1984). Interestingly, these six strategies are but a few of those found in the literature. Alternative sets of strategies exist within several disciplines including human resources and social psychology (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1985). These alternative strategies have been applied to the study of influence within firms (Yukl and Falbe, 1990) but have not, for the most part, been applied to the study of influence between firms.

The study contributes by adapting and applying these alternative influence strategies to the study of influence at an inter-firm level. In the process the authors question whether a negative relationship between coercive influence and performance actually exists when one changes the influence strategies under investigation.

Contrary to predictions, our qualitative findings show that suppliers use frequent checking and persistent reminders (pressure strategies); benefits and favours (exchange); form coalitions between the focal firm and other suppliers (coalition); form coalitions between the focal firm and a department or senior manager in the buyer firm (coalition); and go over a (buyer) manager's head (upward appeals) to improve their performance in buyer-supplier partnerships.

This suggests that prior influence studies are not completely correct in their prediction of a negative relationship between coercive influence strategies and performance in inter-firm relationships. A more accurate description of influence use between firms would suggest that a negative relationship exists between Frazier and Summers' (1984) coercive influence strategies and supplier performance in inter-firm relationships, while a positive relationship exists between Yukl and Falbe's (1990) coercive influence strategies and supplier performance in inter-firm relationships. The findings suggest that there may be two types of coercive influence strategies at work in all

inter-firm relationships. That is, there are coercive influence strategies that hinder supplier performance in inter-firm relationships and there are coercive influence strategies that aid supplier performance in inter-firm relationships.

For the last two decades, inter-firm influence scholars have worked under one given assumption. That is, scholars believed that all coercive influence strategies were negatively linked to performance in inter-firm relationships. This study challenges this assumption by showing that some coercive influence strategies are positively linked to performance in inter-firm relationships. The research contributes to the literature by showing that some coercive influence strategies increase supplier performance satisfaction in inter-firm relationships. Further, it implies that the use of these influence strategies increases relationship harmony, stability and continuation.

The study is organized into five sections. The first reviews the extant literature on inter-firm and intra-firm influence strategies. These reviews are organized chronologically tracing developments from the early 1980's to the present day. The second identifies gaps in the literature and proposes a model to fill them. The third describes the methodology applied here: a discovery orientation to qualitative research. The fourth discusses the findings. Contrary to predictions, the findings show that some coercive influence strategies are positively linked to supplier performance. We conclude with a discussion of the findings and their implications for theory and practice.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literature Review

Inter-firm influence strategies are “the content and structure of the communications utilized by a source firm's personnel in their influence attempts with target firms” (Frazier and Summers, 1984, p. 43). They are the compliance-gaining tactics that channel members use to achieve desired actions.

**Table I. Overview Of Prior Literature On Inter-Firm Influence Strategies
Studies On Influence And Performance**

Author/year/ discipline ¹	Sample ² (Number of companies/number of informants/industry/ relationship type)	Method- ology ³	Independent variable(s) / support factors	Dependent variable(s) / outcomes	Moderating variable (s) / contextual factors ⁵
(Empirical Findings ⁴)					
Ghijsen/ Semeijn/ Ernstson/2010/OPS	N=190/M=47/ I=Automotive/ R.T.= Manufacturer – auto parts supplier relationship	CORR RA	Information exchange (as used by the buyer)	Supplier performance satisfaction (+)	High target dependence
			Recommendations		
			Promises	Supplier performance satisfaction (+/-)	
			Threats	Supplier performance satisfaction (-)	
			Legalistic pleas Requests		
Boyle/Dwyer/ 1995/ORG	N=747/M=314/ I= Industrial products/ R.T. = Supplier-distributor relationships	CORR	Legalistic plea (as used by the supplier)	Relationship performance (-)	Moderate dependence
			Request	(the degree to which inter-firm exchange activities are successfully planned and executed)	
			Threat		
			Information exchange	Relationship performance (+)	
			Recommendations	Relationship performance (+/-)	
Frazier/ Summers/1986/MARK	N=944/M=435/ I=Car dealerships/ R.T.= Manufacturer-car dealer relationships	CORR	Manufacturer use of coercive influence strategies - promises - threats - legal	Dealer's performance satisfaction (-)	High mutual dependence
				Likelihood of dissolving the inter-firm relationship (+)	

Frazier/ Summers/1984 /MARK	N=400/M=184/ I=Car dealerships/ R.T.=Manufacturer-car dealer	CORR	Information exchange	Inter-firm agreement (+)	High mutual dependence
Frazier/Rody/ 1991/MARK	N=930/M=300/ I=Industrial products/ R.T.=Distributor-supplier relationships	MANOVA	Supplier/ distributor use of coercive influence strategy	Latent inter-firm conflict (+) (the extent to which the distributor agreed or disagreed with the supplier's point of view on important distributor decision issues)	Moderate dependence
			Supplier/ distributor use of non- coercive influence strategy	Latent inter-firm conflict (-)	
			Supplier/distributor use of coercive and non-coercive influence strategy	Manifest conflict (+) (Manifest conflict includes the overt behaviours that take place when one channel member is seen to be impeding another channel member's attempts to reach its goals)	

Studies On Influence And Compliance

Payan/Nevin/ 2006/ORG	N=1038/M=356/ I= Fasteners-industrial wholesalers/R.T.= Supplier - distributor relationships	RA	Promise (as used by the supplier)	Compliance (+) (of the distributor)	N/A
			Reason		
			Direct request		
			Appeal to loyalty and friendship		
			Threats	Compliance (-) (acting in accordance with an influence attempt)	
Payan/ McFarland/ 2006/MARK	N=1038/M=363/ I= Fasteners-industrial wholesalers/R.T.= Supplier – distributor relationships	CORR RA	Rationality (as used by supplier)	Compliance (+) (of the distributor)	Low target dependence
			Requests	Compliance (+) (acting in accordance with an influence attempt)	
			Information exchange	Compliance (+/-)	
			Recommendations	Compliance (-)	
			Threats	Compliance (+/-)	
			Promises	Compliance (+/-)	
			Threats	Compliance (+)	
			Promises	Compliance (+)	
			Distributor dependence	Distributor compliance (+) (with supplier requests)	N/A

Studies On The Conditions Leading To Influence Use

Gelderman/ Semeijn/ De Zoete/2008/ OPS	N=12/M=___*/I=Natural gas & electricity/ R.T.= Dyadic buyer-seller relationship	CS	Conditions under which influence strategies are used:		High target dependence
			- When buyers require education	Supplier use of recommendations (+)	
			- Contract renewal	Supplier use of promises (+)	
			- Ineffectiveness of other strategies - The arising of a significant issue	Supplier use of threats (+)	
			- Buyer challenge of contractual terms and conditions	Supplier use of legalistic pleas (+)	

Foundational Works

Frazier/ Summers/1984 /MARK	N=400/M=184/ I=Car dealerships/ R.T. =Manufacturer-car dealer	CORR	Information exchange (as used by manufacturer)	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+)	High mutual dependence
			Request (as used by the manufacturer)	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+)	
			Information exchange	Promises (-)	
				Threats (-)	
				Legalistic pleas (-)	
			Request	Promises (-)	
				Threats (-)	
				Legalistic pleas (-)	
			Use of information exchange strategy (as used by the manufacturer)	Use of request strategy (+)	
			Use of promises strategy (as used by the manufacturer)	Use of threats strategy (+)	
			Information exchange	Inter-firm disagreement (-)	

1) ENG=Engineering; HR = Human Resources; MAG = Management; MARK = Marketing; OPS = Operations Management; ORG =Organization science; PSYCH = Psychology

2) N = Number of companies in the sampling frame; M = Number of informants; I = Industry; R.T. = Relationship type; ___* = information not provided

3) CA =Cluster analysis; CORR = Correlation Analysis; CS = Case Study; FA= Factor Analysis; MANOVA = Multivariate Analysis; MRT = Multi Range Tests; LSM = Least Squares Method; RA = Regression Analysis; SEM = Structured Equation Modelling

4) (+) = Positive effect; (-) = Negative effect; (+/-) = No significance

5) N/A= Study does not use a moderating variable

Much of the literature today, in terms of inter-firm influence strategies, has its foundations in the work of Frazier and Summers (1984). These scholars were the first to identify and empirically test six inter-firm influence strategies, which they labelled as: promises (source certifies to extend specific rewards contingent on the target's compliance), threats (source informs the target that failure to comply will result in negative sanctions), legalistic pleas (source contends that target compliance is required by formal agreement), requests (source asks the target to act with no mention of subsequent sanctions requested or rewards), information exchange (source supplies information with no specific action requested or otherwise indicated) and recommendations (source stresses that specific target action is needed for the latter to achieve desired outcomes). Frazier and Summers (1984) dichotomized these strategies into those that sought to change the target's perception (requests, information exchange and recommendations) and those that sought to change the target's behaviour (promises, threats, legal action).

As Table 1 shows, subsequent scholars built upon this framework by testing each of these strategies with dependent variables, such as performance. Early scholars (Frazier and Summers, 1986; Frazier and Rody, 1991) tested the effects of behaviour changing (coercive strategies) and perception changing (non-coercive strategies) influence strategies on the performance of inter-firm relationships (including the likelihood of relationship dissolution and the presence of conflict). The findings of these studies show that supplier use of coercive influence strategies are negatively linked to buyer performance (Frazier and Summers, 1986) and relationship performance (Boyle and Dwyer, 1995), while being positively linked to relationship dissolution (Frazier and Summers, 1986) and relationship conflict (Frazier and Rody, 1991).

Around the early to mid 1990's influence scholars moved away from general studies on inter-firm influence (Frazier and Summers, 1984), to studies on intra-firm influence, mostly between the buying centre/committee and a buying agent (Farrell and Shroder, 1996; McFarland *et al.*, 2006). Inter-firm influence strategies are differentiated from intra-firm influence strategies by the fact that intra-firm influence strategies have mostly been applied to the study of influence within firms, i.e. between a manager, subordinate and co-worker, while inter-firm influence strategies have mostly been applied to the study of influence between firms, i.e. between two or more firms in an inter-firm relationship.

Intra-firm influence strategies can be divided into hard, soft and rational subsets (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1985). Hard intra-firm influence strategies include pressure (using demands, threats, frequent checking, or persistent reminders), legitimating (seeking to establish the legitimacy of a request by claiming the authority to make it), upward appeals (invoking the authority and power of higher management), exchange (explicit or implicit offers by an agent to provide a favor or benefit to a target in return for doing what the agent requests) and coalitions (enlisting the aid or endorsement of other people to influence a target). Soft intra-firm influence strategies include ingratiation or friendliness (seeking to get a target in a good mood before making a request), consultation (seeking a target's participation in planning a strategy, activity, or change for which the target's support and assistance are desired), personal appeals (appealing to the target's feelings of loyalty and friendship) and inspirational appeals (making a request or proposal that arouses enthusiasm by appealing to a target's values, ideals, and aspirations). And, finally, rational strategies include rational persuasion (using logical arguments and factual evidence to persuade a target that a proposal or request is worthwhile) (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1985).

As Table 2 shows, the findings of these studies show a non-significant link between a supplier's uses of hard influence strategies and manifest influence within the buying centre. Manifest influence is defined as the changes in purchase decision-related opinions that result from the individual's participation in a buying centre (Farrell and Shroder, 1996).

Table II. Overview Of Prior Literature On Intra-Firm influence Strategies

Author/year/ discipline ¹	Sample ² (Number of companies/ number of informants/ industry/relationship type)	Method- ology ³	Independent variable(s) / support factors	Dependent variable(s) / outcomes	Moderating variable(s) / contextual factors ⁵
(Empirical Findings ⁴)					
McFarland/ Challagalla/ Shervani/2006/MA RK	N=400/M=193/I=Industrial retail agriculture equipment /R.T.=Individual dyadic buyer- seller relationship	RA CA MANOV A	Information exchange	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+)	Buyer's task focus (buyers with a higher level of task orientation)
			(as used by the supplier)	(Supplier's influence objectives)	
			Recommendations	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+)	
			Threats	Ability to achieve influence objectives (-)	
			Promises	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+/-)	
			Ingratiation	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+/-)	
			Inspirational appeal	Ability to achieve influence objectives (-)	
			Information exchange	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+)	Buyer's engagement

			Recommendations	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+)	focus (buyers with a higher level of task and interaction orientation)
			Threats	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+/-)	
			Promises	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+/-)	
			Ingratiation	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+)	
			Inspirational appeal	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+/-)	
			Information exchange	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+)	Buyer's self focus (buyers with a higher level of self orientation)
			Recommendation	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+/-)	
			Threats	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+/-)	
			Promises	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+)	
			Ingratiation	Ability to achieve influence objectives (+)	
			Inspirational appeal	Ability to achieve influence objectives (-)	
			Farrell/ Schroder/1996/MA RK	N=453/M=150/ I=Advertising services/ R.T.= Buying centre (committee) - purchasing agent (Intra-firm)	
Inspirational appeal	Manifest influence: "changes in purchase decision-related opinions that result from the individual's participation in a buying center"				
Consultation					
Coalitions	Manifest influence (+/-)				
Exchange					
Personal appeal					
Legitimate pressure					
Venkatesh/ Kohli/Zaltman/199 5/MARK	N=461/M=187/I=Various/ R.T.= Buying centre (committee) - purchasing agent (Intra-firm)	RA	Referent power	Requests (+/-)	N/A
				Threats (-)	
				Legalistic pleas (+/-)	
			Information power	Information exchange (+)	
				Threats (+/-)	
				Legalistic pleas (+/-)	
			Expert power	Recommendations (+)	
			Reinforcement power	Requests (+)	
				Information exchange (+/-)	
				Promises (+)	
				Threats (+)	
			Legitimate power	Requests (+/-)	
				Information exchange (+/-)	
				Legalistic pleas (+)	

1) ENG=Engineering; HR = Human Resources; MAG = Management; MARK = Marketing; OPS = Operations Management; ORG =Organization science; PSYCH = Psychology

2) N = Number of companies in the sampling frame; M = Number of informants; I = Industry; R.T. = Relationship type; __* = information not provided

3) CA=Cluster analysis; CORR = Correlation Analysis; CS = Case Study; FA= Factor Analysis; MANOVA = Multivariate Analysis; MRT = Multi Range Tests; LSM = Least Squares Method; RA = Regression Analysis; SEM = Structured Equation Modelling

4) (+) = Positive effect; (-) = Negative effect; (+/-) = No significance

5) N/A= Study does not use a moderating variable

Of interest here is the level of congruity between the two sets of literatures on Tables 1 and 2. While the inter-firm literature dichotomizes influence strategies into coercive and non-coercive strategies, the intra-firm

literature divides influence strategies into hard, soft and rational strategies (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1985). Additionally, the findings of the inter-firm and intra-firm literatures are not contradictory.

Also of interest to this research is the fact that these two sets of literatures appear recently to be converging. As Table 1 shows, two inter-firm studies have already adapted and applied rational and soft intra-firm influence strategies to an inter-firm context (see Payan and Nevin, 2006; Payan and McFarland, 2006). These show that reason (rational persuasion) and appeals to loyalty/friendship (personal appeal) are positively linked to compliance in inter-firm relationships.

Problematically, an analysis of all the literature found on Tables 1 and 2 revealed two limitations in these studies. First, only one inter-firm influence study has analysed the effects of coercive influence strategies on the performance of suppliers (Ghijsen *et al.*, 2010). That study investigated the effects of buyer influence on supplier performance satisfaction but it did not investigate the effects of supplier influence on the same variable. Second, most of the studies on Tables 1 or 2 did not collect data from a supplier. At a glance, the studies on Tables 1 and 2 appear to provide strong evidence of influence use based on the supplier's perspective. However, a review of each study's methodology revealed that only three studies had actually interviewed a supplier (see McFarland *et al.*, 2006; Gelderman *et al.*, 2008; Ghijsen *et al.*, 2010). All of the remaining evidence on Tables 1 and 2 was gathered from buyer agents, i.e. sales people or other boundary spanning agents, employed by the buyer firm. In these studies, buyer agents were asked to name the influence strategies used by a supplier. Suppliers were never asked to state which influence strategies they found to be of use. Each study advanced several reasons for this avoidance of direct supplier interviews. Chief amongst these was lack of access. In effect, car dealers are more accessible than car manufacturers. Lack of access forced researchers to concentrate most of their research efforts on surveying middle-buyers (dealers and distributors).

To summarize the above, this literature review found (1) evidence of a negative relationship between coercive influence strategies and relationship performance, (2) evidence of a convergence in the intra-firm and inter-firm influence literatures with intra-firm influence strategies adapted and applied to the study of inter-firm influence and (3) evidence that few studies have collected data from suppliers.

The fact that soft intra-firm influence strategies have been adapted and applied to the study of influence at inter-firm level but hard intra-firm influence strategies have not been adapted and applied to the study of influence at an inter-firm level combined with the fact that the supplier's perspective has not been given significant research attention leaves a gap for any researcher.

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

The following analysis fills these gaps in the literature and continues the process of adaptation. The aim is to provide a unique perspective on influence use between firms.

Intra-firm Influence Strategies

From the outset, it is important to mention that several authors have put forward lists of intra-firm influence strategies. All of which are appropriate for this study. As Table 3 shows, Kipnis *et al.* (1980) were the first to measure categories of influence behaviour and common reasons for making influence attempts within organizations. They were the first to identify the intra-firm influence strategies that people use to 'get their way'. The fact that Yukl and Falbe (1990) repeated Kipnis *et al.*'s (1980) study with some minor changes to methodology and two additions to the number of intra-firm influence strategies provides us with some assurance that both Kipnis *et al.*'s (1980) and Yukl and Falbe's (1990) lists are appropriate for this study. Yukl and Falbe's (1990) list therefore provides the basis for the influence strategies mentioned in this study. Yukl and Falbe's (1990) list of hard strategies includes pressure, exchange, coalitions and upward appeals.

Inter-Firm Relationships

This study examines influence in buyer-supplier partnerships. Within the context of this discussion buyer-supplier partnerships (known hereafter as BSPs) are defined as “relatively enduring inter-firm cooperative arrangement, involving flows and linkages that utilize resources and/or governance structures from autonomous organizations, for the joint accomplishment of individual goals linked to the corporate mission of each sponsoring firm” (Parkhe, 1993, p. 794).

BSPs are based on dependence in a particular area of activity. They are designed to create value through relationship, i.e. by joint planning and mutual adaptation of products, processes, people and resources (Wilkinson and Young, 1994). In BSPs, mutual trust and commitment replaces the adversarial assumptions found in repeated transactions and gains are fostered via cooperation (Anderson and Narus, 1991). Compared to repeated transactions and long-term relationships (see Webster, 1992), BSPs require increased communication and involvement on the part of the buyer and the seller, increased time and history, increased joint planning, increased contractual agreement, and increased trust both implicit and explicit (Dwyer *et al.*, 1987; Webster, 1992; Gulati, 1995). BSPs require both formal and informal governance structures. Governance refers to the mix of legal and social controls used by partners (Todeva and Knoke, 2005). BSPs require firms to “utilize resources and/or governance structures from autonomous organizations” (1993, p. 794). Without formal and social controls it would be extremely difficult for partners in BSPs to coordinate activities, allocate administrative responsibilities and divide rewards from joint activities (Todeva and Knoke, 2005).

Table III. Summary Of Intra-Firm Influence Strategies

Kipnis <i>et al.</i> (1980)	Erez <i>et al.</i> (1986)	Yukl and Falbe (1990)	Falbe and Yukl (1992)	Lee and Bohlen (1997)
Assertiveness	Assertiveness	Pressure	Pressure	Assertiveness
Ingratiation	Ingratiation	Ingratiation	Ingratiation	Ingratiation
Rationality	Rationality	Rational persuasion	Rational persuasion	Rational reasoning
Exchange	Exchange	Exchange	Exchange	Bargaining
Coalition	Coalition	Coalition	Coalition	Coalition
Sanctions	Sanctions	N/A	N/A	Sanctions
Upward appeals	Upward appeals	Upward appeals	N/A	Higher mgt support
Blocking	Blocking	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	Inspirational appeal	Inspirational appeal	Inspirational appeal
N/A	N/A	Consultation	Consultation	Consultation
N/A	N/A	N/A	Legitimizing	N/A
N/A	Personal benefits	N/A	Personal appeals	N/A

- N/A = Not Measured

Influence And Performance

As Table 1 shows, there is evidence of a link between influence and performance in inter-firm relationships (Frazier and Summers, 1986). However, performance is an elusive concept. There are many ways to assess performance. For example, performance can be assessed in terms of performance satisfaction (Mohr and Spekman, 1994), financial outcomes (Lusch and Brown, 1996), completion time (Woolthuis *et al.*, 2005) and continuity of relationship (Noordeweir *et al.*, 1990).

This study uses satisfaction to assess the performance of suppliers in BSPs. For the purposes of this study, satisfaction is defined as “a positive affective state resulting from the appraisal of all aspects of a firm’s working relationship with another firm” (Anderson and Narus, 1984, p. 66). Satisfaction is an affective judgment not an objective calculation. Satisfaction was chosen because it is a close proxy for many performance outcomes, including perceived effectiveness and lack of conflict/disagreement (Anderson and Narus, 1990). Disagreements between partners tend to block the achievement of relationship goals, eliciting frustration and thereby causing feelings of unpleasantness or lack of satisfaction among partners (Anderson and Narus, 1990). Satisfaction was also chosen

because it is the performance measurement used by the majority of influence scholars investigating influence and performance. As Table 1 shows there are only three empirical studies directly or indirectly investigating influence and performance in inter-firm relationships (Boyle and Dwyer, 1995; Frazier and Summers, 1986; Frazier and Rody, 1991). Of these three empirical studies, one uses satisfaction to assess performance in inter-firm relationships (Frazier and Summers, 1986), another uses the degree to which inter-firm exchange activities are successfully planned and executed (Boyle and Dwyer, 1995), while the final study uses satisfaction's proxy, conflict/harmony (Frazier and Rody, 1991) for the same purposes. Using satisfaction as a performance assessment allows us to replicate an important condition of these previous studies thus allowing some comparability between results.

Predictions

As the literature review shows, the literature currently contains two main limitations. First, scholars have not analyzed the effects of coercive influence strategies on the performance of suppliers. Second, prior inter-firm influence studies did not collect data from suppliers. Also, and at the same time, the literature is evolving. Intra-firm influence strategies are now being applied to the study of influence at inter-firm level.

These factors created a rather perplexing problem for this research. Since we have no data about supplier use of coercive influence strategies and supplier performance and we have no data on the application of hard influence strategies at inter-firm level, the main problem faced by this research is that the predictions made in this study cannot be based directly on prior research but rather are inferred from prior research.

Inter-firm studies. There are three empirical studies assessing the performance of firms in inter-firm relationships. The first was conducted in the late 1980s. Using a partial correlation analysis and a sample of 300 distributors, Frazier and Summers (1986) investigate the relationship between a dealer's perception of their manufacturer's power and the manufacturer's use of coercive and non-coercive influence strategies within the context of an automobile distribution channel. The findings show that a manufacturer's (supplier's) use of coercive influence strategies (promises, threats and legalistic pleas) has a negative effect on a dealer's (buyer's) performance. Performance is defined as the level of satisfaction exhibited by the dealer in the inter-firm relationship. The researchers also find that a manufacturer's use of coercive influence strategies has a positive effect on the likelihood of relationship dissolution. The findings indicate that the use of coercive influence strategies can lead to several problems in the relationship including, retaliation by the target, perceptions of the source as exploitative and target dissatisfaction with the exchange relationship prompting to a predisposition towards dissolving it.

The second study was conducted in the early 1990s. Using a multivariate analysis and a sample of 300 distributors, Frazier and Rody (1991) investigate the relationship between non-coercive and coercive strategies and inter-firm power, latent conflict, manifest conflict and conflict resolution constructs within the context of an industrial products channel. The study shows that a supplier's and a distributor's use of coercive influence strategies (promises, threats and legalistic pleas) are positively linked to latent inter-firm conflict. Latent inter-firm conflict is defined as the extent to which the distributor agreed or disagreed with the supplier's point of view on important distributor decision issues. The study's findings indicate that tolerance for the use of coercive influence strategies among suppliers and distributors is low. Moreover, the use of coercive influence strategies by one firm is likely to be met by the use of coercive strategies by the other. And, the use of coercive strategies heightens the state of incompatibility between the firms.

The third study was conducted in the mid 1990s. Using a series of structural equation models and a sample of 314 distributors, Boyle and Dwyer (1995) investigate the relationship between influence use and relationship performance within the context of an industrial distribution channel. The findings show that non-coercive influence strategies (information exchange) have a positive effect on relationship performance, while coercive influence strategies (requests, legalistic pleas and threats) have a negative effect on it. Performance is defined as the degree to which inter-firm exchange activities are successfully planned and executed. The findings indicate that the use of coercive influence strategies tends to hinder the long-term performance of channel relationships.

Intra-firm studies. There is only one empirical study assessing the effectiveness of intra-firm influence strategies. That study was conducted in the mid to late 1990s. Using a mix of correlation and factor analyses and a sample of 150 purchasing decisions, Farrell and Schroder (1996) investigate the effectiveness of seven intra-firm influence strategies in influencing the purchasing decision outcomes of a buying centre. The findings show that soft influence strategies (inspirational appeal and consultation) and rational influence strategies (rational persuasion), as used by advertising agencies, are positively linked to manifest influence within the buying centre, while hard influence strategies (coalitions, exchange, personal appeal and pressure), as used by advertising agencies, are non-significantly linked to manifest influence within the buying centre. Manifest influence is defined as the changes in purchase decision-related opinions that result from the individual's participation in a buying centre. In line with previous studies, the findings indicate that strategies that attempt to intimidate, solicit or 'buy out' others tend to be ineffective in influencing others.

Summary. To summarize, this review finds that supplier use of coercive influence strategies is negatively linked to buyer performance (Frazier and Summers, 1986) and relationship performance (Boyle and Dwyer, 1995), while being positively linked to relationship dissolution (Frazier and Summers, 1986) and inter-firm conflict (Frazier and Rody, 1991), while, agent use of hard influence strategies is non-significantly linked to manifest influence (Farrell and Schroder, 1996). Based on this evidence, the study predicts that supplier use of hard/coercive influence strategies is negatively linked to supplier performance. This prediction is summed up in the set of propositions found on Table 4.

Table IV. The Prediction Matrix

Construct ¹	Definition ²	Predictions/propositions ³
Pressure	With pressure strategies, an agent “uses demands, threats, frequent checking, or persistent reminders in an attempt to influence a target to carry out a request” (Falbe and Yukl, 1992, p. 642).	P1. Pressure applied by suppliers is negatively linked to supplier performance.
Exchange	Exchange strategies involve “explicit or implicit offers by an agent to provide a favor or benefit to a target in return for doing what the agent requests” (Falbe and Yukl, 1992, p. 642).	P2. Exchange initiated by suppliers is negatively linked to supplier performance.
Coalitions	With coalition strategies, an agent “enlists the aid or endorsement of other people to influence a target to do what the agent wants” (Falbe and Yukl, 1992, p. 643). <i>At the outset, it is important to mention that in this context there is no literature detailing the precise makeup or content of a coalition. As such, the following is based on logical deduction. Coalitions can take place between firms or people. A coalition can take place between a focal supplier and another (outside) supplier and/or between focal supplier (employees or managers) and a faction (employees or managers) within the buyer firm. Alternatively, a coalition may take another form unforeseen at this juncture.</i>	P3. Coalitions initiated by suppliers are negatively linked to supplier performance.
Upward Appeals	Upward appeals are an attempt to invoke the authority and power of higher management by (a) telling the target you are acting on behalf of higher management, (b) threatening to go over the target's head or (c) directly asking superiors to help you influence the target (Yukl and Falbe, 1990, p. 135).	P4. Upward appeals undertaken by suppliers are negatively linked to supplier performance.

1. List of influence strategies based on Yukl and Falbe (1990)
2. Definitions of influence strategies based on Falbe and Yukl (1992)
3. List of predictions/propositions based on the literature review

Model Of Influence Strategies

Figure 1 proposes a negative relationship between hard/coercive influence strategies and supplier performance satisfaction.

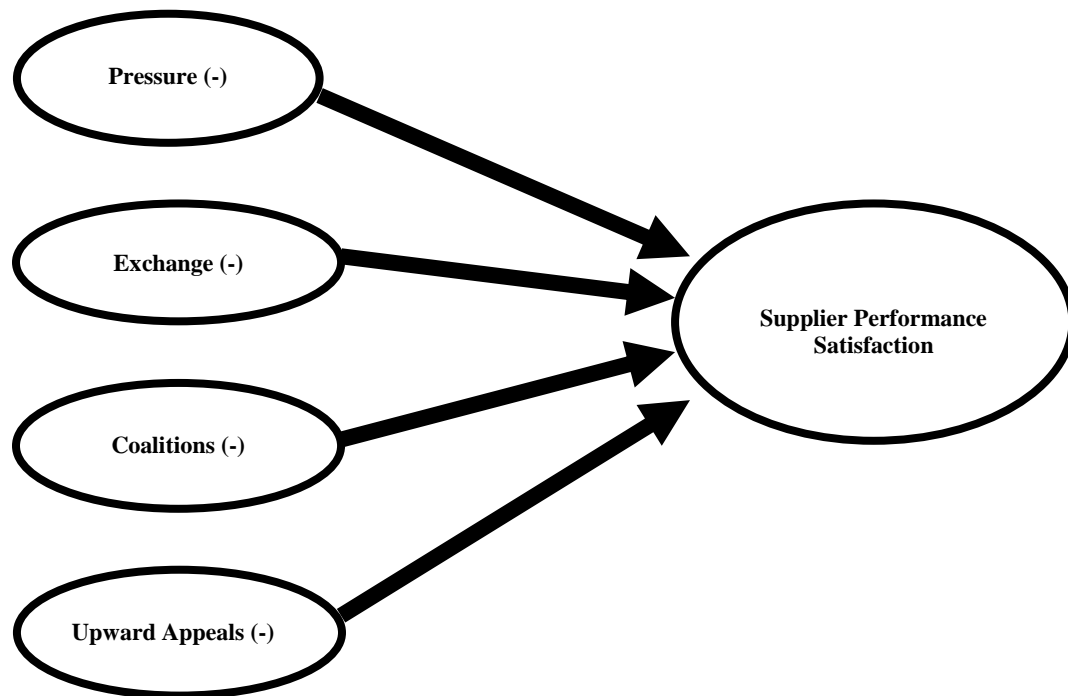


Figure 1. Theorized negative relationship between hard/coercive influence strategies and supplier performance satisfaction

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a discovery orientation approach (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2006). The discovery orientation is a phenomenological approach that allows researchers to uncover patterns not previously studied in confirmatory oriented research. The discovery orientation was selected because it allows researchers to explore the types of influence used by suppliers, while simultaneously gathering an understanding of why suppliers use some forms of influence and why they do not use others.

The Australian Recruitment Services Industry provides the setting for this research. The Australian Recruitment Services Industry, of which labour hire is a major element, includes more than 2700 organizations with offices at 5547 locations across Australia. The industry generates an income of more than AUD\$10 billion contributing some 1.3 per cent to Gross Domestic Product (Hall, 2006).

The recruitment industry was selected as the setting of this study because: (1) researchers have characterized this industry as relationship oriented (Purcell and Purcell, 1998; Lanza *et al.*, 2003; Kosnik *et al.*, 2006). Traditionally these supply relationships had been short-term. However, more recent developments point to a range of long-term relationships between agencies and clients, including BSPs (Lanza *et al.*, 2003; Kosnik *et al.*, 2006). And, (2) accessibility was of high importance. As mentioned in the literature review, a major problem faced by prior researchers was 'lack of access.' The recruitment industry was selected to circumvent this problem. The probability of gaining access to suppliers in this industry was significantly higher than the probability of gaining access to suppliers in most other industries - there are thousands of recruitment firms in Australia.

Potential participating firms were selected using an online database operated by the Recruitment and Consulting Association of Australia (RCSA), an industry body representing over 90% of recruitment firms in Australia (www.RCSA.com.au).

Contact with potential participants was made in August 2007, by mail, with each potential respondent firm on the RCSA database sent an invitation letter. In total, 320 letters were sent out with each letter requesting the participation of the recruitment firm and also a meeting with the general manager of each firm. In total, 106 letters were returned representing 33% of potential participants. Out of those 106 returned letters, 20 letters or 19% were unopened – return to sender – either the business had closed down or had moved address, 26 letters or 24% were outright rejections and 60 letters or 57% offered tentative acceptances from office assistants. All potential participants – firms indicating tentative acceptances – were followed-up by phone. Face to face meetings between the researcher and the general manager, managing director or service manager of each firm took place in October 2007.

The selection process of participating firms was as follows. Supplier firms operating only ad hoc structures (36 firms) were immediately eliminated from the pool of potential participants. Ad-hoc recruitment is a low volume decentralized form of recruitment, resembling the spot market for labour. It is a trading agreement not a partnership (Webster, 1992). The remaining suppliers (24 firms) were sorted according to the following criteria: (1) the supplier firm must have been in operation for at least 5 years, (2) the supplier agreement must have been in continuous operation for at least the last 2 years, and (3) availability. In total, 4 firms met the criteria with all 4 firms selected as participants.

Key informants within each participating firm were selected by the general manager, managing director or service manager with instruction that informants should (1) have special knowledge of the issues being researched and (2) be able and willing to communicate with the researcher (John and Reve, 1982). In total, 17 informants were selected to participate in the study. Out of the 17 informants interviewed, 8 interviews were used to construct this study. Selectees included 2 general managers, 1 service manager, 3 account managers and 2 consultants.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants. Semi-structured interviews required the interviewer to ask preset questions and then to probe the respondent using follow up questions. Follow up questions were not prepared in advance. Instead, these questions were asked in response to specific interviewee comments and cues. Respondents were asked pre-set questions of the following type: has your agency ever used pressure, e.g. by making demands, threats, frequent checking or persistent reminders, as a strategy to influence buyers? If yes, what aspect(s) of this strategy did you use? If no, why are you unable to use pressure to influence buyers? If yes, did the use of pressure as an influence strategy increase your level of satisfaction with the BSP? Please share an example. Follow up questions were mainly ‘what if’ questions and other types of probing questions. For example: What if your agency had tried to use pressure, e.g. by making demands, threats, frequent checking or persistent reminders, as a strategy to influence buyers? What would have been the end result? Each of the preset questions was varied to include the variables shown on Table 5. The variables on Table 5 are based on the definitions found in the conceptual analysis (see Table 4, column 2).

Data was collected solely from the recruitment firm’s point of view since the unit of analysis, in this study, is the supplier. Each interview was conducted over an average period of one and a half hours. Interviews were taped and transcribed. The raw data was then gathered for analysis.

Data analysis involved placing a cross section of questions and their responses onto a matrix. Content analysis was then used to elicit the main themes and sub-themes. Responses were compared, contrasted and related with similarities and differences in answers notated and positives and negatives identified, i.e. when the respondents said something and when they did not, in what context the respondents made a response and the nuances, if any.

Table V. Summary Of Variables Examined

Influence Strategy ¹	Influence Strategy Exercised in BSPs ²	Source ³
Pressure	Demands	(Falbe and Yukl, 1992, p. 642)
	Threats	
	Frequent Checking	
	Persistent Reminders	
	Other	
Exchange	Benefit	(Falbe and Yukl, 1992, p. 642)
	Favour	
	Other	
Coalition	Focal Supplier – Other Supplier	(Falbe and Yukl, 1992, p. 643)
	Focal Supplier – Buyer Faction	
	Other	
Upward Appeals	Going over the Manager's head	(Yukl and Falbe, 1990, p. 135)
	Other	

1. List of generic influence strategies
2. Breakdown of each influence strategy
3. Empirical source

A frequency analysis was then applied to the data which recorded the number of times or 'hits' each influence strategy variable, as shown in column 2 of Table 5, is directly observed, inferred or not observed by any of the respondents. For the purposes of this research a variable is directly observed when the respondent answered 'yes' to a question asking whether or not they had used an influence strategy to increase their satisfaction in BSPs. A variable is inferred if the respondent mentions that they had used an influence strategy outside the context of the specific question asked but within the context of the general interview. Conversely, a variable is not observed or inferred when respondents indicated that they were unable to use an influence strategy to increase their satisfaction in BSPs. The results of the analysis can be found on Table 6, in the following section.

FINDINGS

Table 6 provides a summary of the findings. As it shows, suppliers in BSPs use frequent checking and persistent reminders (pressure strategy); benefit and favor (exchange); form coalitions between themselves and other suppliers; form coalitions between themselves and one department or senior manager in the buyer firm (coalitions); and go over the (buyer) manager's head (upward appeal) to improve their performance in BSPs.

Table VI. Summary Of Findings

Propositions ¹	Influence Strategy ²	Influence Strategies used to improve performance in BSPs ³
P1	Pressure	Frequent Checking
		Persistent Reminders
P2	Exchange	Benefit
		Favour
P3	Coalition	Focal Supplier – Other Supplier
		Focal Supplier – Buyer Faction
P4	Upward Appeals	Going over the Manager's head

1. List of propositions
2. List of generic influence strategies
3. Summary of findings

Pressure

All of the suppliers interviewed mentioned that the use of threats or demands would make the buyer non-compliant. Threats and demands decrease the buyer's and supplier's satisfaction with the BSP. Suppliers mentioned that threatened buyers would most likely ignore the supplier and seek out alternative suppliers. The same applied to buyers in receipt of supplier demands. As the general manager of one of the BSPs mentioned:

We definitely wouldn't use demands or threats. I mean that would be completely counterproductive. That would actually have the reverse effect. If you demanded or threatened a manager to use our services they would just completely write you off.

This finding is supported by the literature. Scholars have shown that sanctions will likely result in the target's perception of relative loss (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980). This perception can lead customers to seek alternative suppliers.

However, most of the suppliers in BSPs mentioned that they had used frequent checking and persistent reminders to influence buyers. Suppliers mentioned that buyer managers were not averse to such behaviour. Buyer managers often needed to be reminded of impending deadlines and/or schedules. They appreciated the fact that suppliers made the effort to follow up. Suppliers mentioned that the use of frequent checking and persistent reminders increased their satisfaction with the BSP. As an account manager from one of the BSPs mentioned:

A lot of people have the policy that you ignore whatever communication until it comes back to you a second time I think. It suddenly becomes important when someone bothers to follow it up. So we generally make a phone call and follow it up with an email then follow it up with a phone call being persistent.

However, suppliers in BSPs were aware that the application of persistent reminders and frequent checking required some finesse. There is a fine line between persistence and harassment. Buyer firm managers needed to be reminded of impending deadlines but they did not want to feel harassed. As an account manager in one of the BSPs mentioned:

I wouldn't really leave more than one message. I'd keep trying them but just leave one message. They normally come back and apologise, and say I'm so sorry. Just haven't had a chance. So, I kind of understand that. But you still have to be persistent...

Overall we therefore find partial support for proposition 1. Pressure (frequent checking and persistent reminders) applied by suppliers is positively linked to supplier performance.

Exchange

Before discussing these findings, it is important to mention that exchange, in this article, refers to a trade between two or more parties involving a time delimited quid pro quo. Exchange is a form of specific reciprocity - time bound, occurring in sequence, with items of close value (Keohane, 1986).

Suppliers in BSPs were strongly supportive of exchanges that involved company benefits or work related favours, for example industry information in exchange for a (buyer) manager's compliance. As an account manager from one of the BSPs reported:

I think that's part of it, in terms of the benefit to them. So for instance we'll provide a financial year report on all supply that we've done, comparisons across the industry, drop off figures, replacement figures, all of those kinds of statistics they do internally. I'd say that sort of thing is a benefit.

Suppliers in BSPs viewed exchanges of information as vital to the partnership. They mentioned that this form of exchange increased the performance of both partners in the inter-firm relationship. Suppliers that were aware of buyer's internal workings were more likely to make accurate decisions. They were better able to target their offerings to the buyer. This resulted in an increase in the suppliers' satisfaction with the BSP.

However, suppliers in BSPs were not supportive of exchanges that involved personal benefits or personal favours, for example a trip on the supplier's yacht in exchange for a manager's compliance. Suppliers in BSPs mentioned that they had the ability to exchange personal benefits and personal favours with buyer managers but that they were unwilling to do so. As the general manager of one of the BSP reported:

Well it's just not how professional services works. What would we do? Promise them as a favour we're going to take them to the footy or something? No we wouldn't do that it's just not the way we would operate. It's not effective. We would look like we're bribing them. It's not professional. It's against our ethics and our code of business conduct.

Suppliers in BSPs believed that personal favours were not associated with increased satisfaction. Purchasing loyalty is generally not considered to be professional or ethical. It is always better to have a buyer manager who understands the supplier's value proposition than it is to have a buyer manager who is willing to give you work for gifts or any other type of favour.

Based on this evidence, we find partial support for proposition 2. Exchange (company benefits or work related favours) initiated by suppliers is positively linked to supplier performance.

Coalitions

Suppliers in BSPs mentioned that at least twenty percent of their supply needs were allocated to outside suppliers. These outside suppliers were contracted when the focal supplier did not have the expertise to handle the buyer's supply requirements or when the focal supplier did not have ready access to supply. Suppliers mentioned that the use of outside suppliers gave them additional clout with the buyer. It increased the supplier's bargaining position in the inter-firm relationship. The combination of these two advantages increased the supplier's satisfaction with the BSP. Coalitions also gave the supplier access to unofficial channels of information. Outside suppliers, in the coalition, that received procurement requests from the buyer made an effort to inform the buyer-supplier partner of that request. This gave the buyer-supplier partner the ability to contact the buyer firm manager and inform that manager that all procurement requests were to go through them. As a consultant from one of the BSPs remarked:

I've got very good relationships with the suppliers I use. They will come to me if they get a job request. The reason they will come to me is because if I've got the job, they know it's approved. And the people that have built relationships with me can understand that.

Suppliers in BSPs also mentioned that they formed coalitions between themselves and one department in the buyer firm or between themselves and one person in the buyer firm – usually a senior manager or the partnership sponsor. Sponsors are senior managers within the buyer firm who have championed the implementation of the BSP and who have a stake in its success and continuation. Suppliers mentioned that influence over a sponsor or senior manager gave them additional clout in the BSP. It effectively gave the supplier a say into the buyer's internal affairs. Such influence increased the supplier's satisfaction with the BSP. As the managing director of one of the BSPs remarked:

Faction. It's hard to say but certainly we would form an informal alliance with senior managers in order to influence lower managers. That's generally how we would do it. Whether you call that a faction with them or not I'm not sure. So we certainly use the organisation's internal mechanism.

Therefore there is no support for proposition 3. Coalitions initiated by suppliers are positively linked to supplier performance.

Upward Appeals

Suppliers in BSPs mentioned that they had successfully used upward appeals to influence buyer managers. These suppliers associated the use of upward appeals with increased supplier satisfaction. According to our respondents, upward appeals are successful because people in organizations usually do what their bosses tell them to do. However, suppliers warned that upward appeals were not a strategy of first choice. Dialogue was the strategy of first choice. According to the suppliers interviewed, upward appeals had to be used with caution because it could damage the relationship between the supplier and buyer manager. This finding is supported by the literature showing that upward appeals can strain inter-personal relationships (Yukl and Falbe, 1990). As the general manager of one of BSPs reported:

We would generally only do that though after repeated unsuccessful attempts to work with that manager. Now I'll give you an example. We had a manager who said look I'm not using you because I need X and you just can't find X. If we then put a strategy in to source X and that person still doesn't use us then I would absolutely feel it's reasonable for us to escalate it to their manager and we would absolutely do that.

Upward appeals were either done in person or via formal reporting mechanisms. In person involves going the manager's manager and verbally reporting the fact that the supplier's requests were being ignored, while formal reporting mechanisms involves using the buyer's reporting mechanisms to identify (buyer) manager's who were not following the supply process. This information was then gathered in a report and handed over to the buyer's senior management team. As the senior manager of one of the BSPs reported:

Yeah we generate a report for one of our clients on a monthly basis which highlights all the non-compliant activity. You'll never find the same name on two sets of reports because it's almost like a hit list. If the CEO sees a non-compliant manager she will pick up the phone and say I see you didn't use SUPPLIER X this month, not good enough. I don't want to see your name again on that list.

Surprisingly, one supplier mentioned that upward appeals were not the most successful way to influence buyer managers. That supplier mentioned that they did not see a clear association between upward appeals and supplier performance. The supplier in question mentioned that sideways appeals were more likely to be successful, i.e. going to a peer or going to the owner of the solution on the buyer side. That supplier associated sideways appeal with supplier performance satisfaction. As an account manager from one of the BSPs reported:

That's a really tricky one. I think we get trapped a little bit, having such a close relationship with our key stakeholder that it's hard to go above them. Rather than above, our port of call is the internal stakeholders. Usually they recruit the internal – whoever owns the solution on the client side, you'll go there and they will work it out in their own business.

We therefore find no support for proposition 4. Upward appeals undertaken by suppliers are positively linked to supplier performance.

DISCUSSION

This study offered several propositions about suppliers, hard/coercive influence strategies and supplier performance. We proposed that a negative relationship exists between a supplier's use of pressure, exchange, coalitions and upward appeals and supplier performance in BSPs. These propositions were based on the findings of several inter-firm (Boyle and Dwyer 1995; Frazier and Rody 1991; Frazier and Summers 1986) and intra-firm (Farrell and Shroder 1996) studies.

The current study does not support these propositions. We provide supportive evidence that frequent checking and persistent reminders (pressure), benefits and favors (exchange), coalitions between the focal firm and other suppliers (coalition), coalitions between the focal firm and a department or senior manager in the buyer firm (coalition) and going over a (buyer) manager's head (upward appeals) are positively linked to supplier performance in BSPs.

These findings contradict those of prior influence/performance studies. While prior studies show that supplier use of coercive influence strategies are negatively linked to relationship performance and positively linked to inter-firm conflict and relationship dissolution (Boyle and Dwyer 1995; Frazier and Summers 1986; Frazier and Rody 1991), we show that supplier use of hard/coercive influence strategies are positively linked to supplier performance. Further, the findings imply that the use of these hard/coercive influence strategies is positively linked to relationship harmony, stability and continuation.

One can attribute the lack of congruity between the findings of prior inter-firm studies and ours to differences in the nature and type of influence strategies under analysis. Many of the hard/coercive influence strategies under analysis in this study, that is pressure, exchange, coalitions and upward appeals, may actually work in the buyer's favor, which would explain the buyer's willingness to accept such behavior. For example, the use of

frequent checking and persistent reminders (pressure) aids the supplier in the supply process and, at the same time, aids the buyer in receiving the supply requested.

The findings presented in this study do not deny the validity of previous studies rather they suggest that strategies are more heterogeneous than previously reported in the literature. That is, there are coercive influence strategies that hinder supplier performance in inter-firm relationships and there are coercive influence strategies that aid supplier performance in inter-firm relationships. The coercive influence strategies that hinder supplier performance are promises, threats and legal action and the hard/coercive influence strategies that aid supplier performance are frequent checking and persistent reminders (pressure), benefits and favors (exchange), coalitions between the focal firm and other suppliers (coalition), coalitions between the focal firm and a department or senior manager in the buyer firm (coalition) and going over a (buyer) manager's head (upward appeals).

Based on these findings, we suggest that the dilemma for suppliers is one of choice. Suppliers must choose the influence strategies that aid their performance and avoid the strategies that hinder their performance. This suggestion will be of significant interest to managers and other practitioners working within the context of an inter-firm relationship. In effect, we provide managers with a road map or prescription for success based on an analysis of the influence strategies that work and do not work in inter-firm relationships.

This study will benefit the management discipline and practitioners within the field. For the management discipline, the benefit of merging intra-firm and inter-firm literatures is that it provides scholars within this discipline with a hitherto untested set of influence strategies. Testing these strategies at inter-firm level will lead to the creation and development of a new sub-field within that body of literature. This study also benefits practitioners. Suppliers seeking to improve their performance in inter-firm relationships now have a choice between two sets of successful strategies –coercive strategies or hard/coercive strategies. Their choice of strategies will depend upon their own individual circumstances and/or relationship dynamics.

FURTHER RESEARCH

This study establishes the foundation for further research on intra-firm influence strategies at an inter-firm level. An interesting area of further research could involve a quantitative test of the model developed here. This test would quantitatively examine the role of hard/coercive intra-firm influence strategies on buyer/supplier/inter-firm performance.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Dr. Stephane Bignoux is a Lecturer in Management at Middlesex University in London. He graduated with a PhD from Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. He has written 8 papers on the topic of inter-firm relationships. His research interests include inter-firm relationships, power, control and influence and his teaching interests are in strategic management, marketing management and international business.

Dr. David Gray is a Senior Lecturer in Marketing at Macquarie University in Sydney. He graduated with a PhD from the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. He has written over 8 papers on the topic of inter-firm relationships. His research interests include inter-firm relationships, influence strategies, decision making and corporate social responsibility and his teaching interests are in marketing strategy and strategic management.

REFERENCES

1. Anderson, J.C. and Narus, J.A. (1984), "A model of the distributor perspective of distributor manufacturer working relationships", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 48 Fall, pp. 62-74.
2. Anderson, J.C. and Narus, J.A. (1990), "A model of distributor firm and manufacturer firm working partnerships", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 54 January, pp. 42-58.
3. Anderson, J.C. and Narus, J.A. (1991), "Partnering as a focused market strategy", *California Management Review*, Vol. 33 No. 3, pp. 95-113.
4. Bacharach, S. and Lawler, L. (1980), *Power and Politics in Organizations*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

5. Boyle, B.F. and Dwyer, F.R. (1995), "Power, bureaucracy, influence, and performance", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 189–201.
6. Boyle, B.F., Dwyer, F.R., Robicheaux, R.A. and Simpson, J.T. (1992), "Influence strategies in marketing channels: Measures and use in different relationship structures", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 29 No. 4, pp. 462–473.
7. Creswell, J and Plano-Clark, V. (2007), *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, Sage Publications, Los Angeles, CA.
8. Dwyer, F.R., Paul, H., Schur, T. and Sejo, O. (1987), "Developing buyer-seller relationships", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 51 April, pp. 11-27.
9. Erez, M., Rim, Y. and Keider, I. (1986), "The two sides of the tactics of influence: Agent v/s target", *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, Vol. 59, pp. 25-39.
10. Falbe, C.M. and Yukl, G. (1992), "Consequences for managers of using single influence tactics and combinations of tactics", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 35 No. 3, pp. 638–652.
11. Farrell, M.A. and Schroder, W. (1996), "Influence strategies in organisational buying decisions", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 293-303.
12. Frazier, G. and Rody, R. (1991), "The use of influence strategies in inter-firm relationships in industrial product channels", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 55 No. 1, pp. 52–69.
13. Frazier, G. and Summers, J. (1984), "Inter-firm influence strategies and their application within distribution channels", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 48 No. 3, pp. 43–55.
14. Frazier, G.L. and Summers, J.D. (1986), "Perceptions of inter-firm power and its use within a franchise channel of distribution", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 23, pp. 169–176.
15. Gelderman, C., Semeijn, J., and De Zoete, R. (2008), "The use of coercive influence strategies by dominant suppliers", *Journal of Purchasing & Supply Management*, Vol. 14, pp. 220-229.
16. Ghijsen, P.W., Semeijn, J., and Ernstson, S. (2010), "Supplier satisfaction and commitment: The role of influence strategies and supplier development", *Journal of Purchasing & Supply Management*, Vol. 16, pp. 17-26.
17. Gulati, R. (1995), "Does familiarity breed trust? The implications of repeated ties for contractual choice in alliances", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 38 No. 1, pp. 85-112.
18. Hall, R. (2006), "Temporary agency work and HRM in Australia: Cooperation, specialization and satisfaction for the good of all?", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 35 No. 2, pp. 158-174.
19. John, G. and Reve, T. (1982), "The reliability and validity of key informant data from dyadic relationships in marketing channels", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 19 No. 4, pp. 517–524.
20. Keohane, R. (1986), "Reciprocity in international relations", *International Organization*, Vol. 40 No. 1, pp. 1-27.
21. Kipnis, D. and Schmidt, S.M. (1985), "The language of persuasion", *Psychology Today*, April, pp. 40-46.
22. Kipnis, D., Schmidt, S. and Wilkinson, I. (1980), "Intra-organizational influence tactics: Explorations in getting one's way", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 65 No. 4, pp. 440-452.
23. Kosnik, T., Wong-Mingji, D. and Hoover, K. (2006), "Outsourcing vs insourcing in the human resource supply chain: A comparison of five generic models", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 35 No. 6, pp. 671-683.
24. Lanza, B., Maryn, M. and Elders, R. (2003), "Legal status of contingent workers", *Compensation and Benefits Review*, Vol. 35 No. 4, pp. 47-60.
25. Lee, D. and Bohlen, G. (1997), "Influence strategies of project managers in the information technology industry", *Engineering Management Journal*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 7-14.
26. Lusch, R.F. and Brown, J.R. (1996), "Interdependency, contracting, and relational behavior in marketing channels", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 60 October, pp. 19–38.
27. McFarland, R., Challagalla, G. and Shervani, T. (2006), "Influence tactics for effective adaptative selling", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 70 October, pp. 103–117.
28. Mohr, J. and Spekman, R. (1994), "Characteristics of partnership success: Partnership attributes, communication behavior, and conflict resolution techniques", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 135–152.
29. Noordewier, T., John, G. and Nevin, J. (1990), "Performance outcomes of purchasing arrangements in industrial buyer-vendor relationships", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 54 October, pp. 80-93.
30. Parkhe, A. (1993), "Strategic alliance structuring. A game theory and transaction cost examination of inter-firm cooperation", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 36 No. 4, pp. 794-829.

31. Payan, J.M. and McFarland, R.G. (2006), “Decomposing influence strategies: argument structure and dependence as determinants of the effectiveness of influence strategies in gaining channel member compliance”, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 69 No. 3, pp. 66–79.
32. Payan, J. and Nevin, J.R. (2006), “Influence strategy efficacy in supplier–distributor relationships”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 59, pp. 457–465.
33. Purcell, K. and Purcell, J. (1998), “In-Sourcing, outsourcing and the growth of contingent labour as evidence of flexible employment strategies”, *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 39-59
34. Todeva, E. and Knoke, D. (2005), “Strategic alliances and models of collaboration”, *Management Decision*, Vol. 43 No. 1, pp. 123-148.
35. Venkatesh, R., Kohli, A.K. and Zaltman, G. (1995), “Influence strategies in buying centers”, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 58 October, pp. 71–82.
36. Webster, F.E. (1992), “The changing role of marketing in the corporation”, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 56 October, pp. 1-17.
37. Wilkinson, I.F. and Young, L.C. (1994), “Business dancing: The nature and role of inter-firm relations in business strategy”, *Asia-Australia Marketing Journal*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 67–79.
38. Woolthuis, R., Hillebrand, B. and Nooteboom, B. (2005), “Trust, contract and relationship Development”, *Organization Studies*, Vol. 26 No. 6, pp. 813–840.
39. Yukl, G. and Falbe, C. (1990), “Influence tactics and objectives in upward, downward and lateral attempts”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 75 No. 2, pp. 132-140.

Appendix A

Table VII. Additional quotes from respondents in BSPs

Influence Strategies ¹

Quote A

Quote B

Quote C

Quote D

Pressure

Not demands or threats. Frequent checking; that potentially there might be a case to say for those hiring managers who are not complying with the rules there will be reports produced on a regular basis to track them but again I come back to the point that in those cases the reason why people don't follow the rules is because the onsite provider can't give them quality or quantity of candidates they're seeking. So unless they can come up with a reason or can resolve that problem that hiring manager is justified in going outside...

I do persistently remind and frequently check, yeah. We have to. I do it all the time. I've probably done it today. So just constantly following up on CVs, constantly following up for interview feedback. Clients don't necessarily see the value in giving feedback on candidates that they don't want to take forward, so they don't bother calling you. So it's constantly chasing up at every point of the process to get what you need, to be able to give the candidate what they need basically...

I'd say yes. Not me so much because I'm not managing at that level, that sort of detail. But just in terms of following up, getting commitments to things, seeing that the client's [unclear] is followed through... it would be more about persistent reminders and follow ups. I don't know about threats. Again, even though they're partnerships, you've still got a sense that this is a client. You're serving the client as a business. Threats are not the style of our managers, but definitely pushing in terms of time frames and follow up, persistence and so on.

Demands and threats no. Frequent checking and persistent reminders definitely. I asked one of the internal staff today whether I was being a stalker because I was trying to get in contact with a hiring manager just leaving messages saying as I said yesterday the candidate would like to know the outcome can you get back to me, you know that kind of thing. I certainly don't think it's persistent follow up with no reason, for instance cold courting is not something we invite to the door but in terms of following up on clients then we're definitely persistent on trying to get feedback from people.

Exchange

That's just not the way we do business at RECRUITER X. I mean we believe in when we commit to a client that we'd like to recruit on their behalf we take that commitment seriously and if there is an issue with us not being able to get the candidates they want then the only way we can really see that we can rectify that is to come up with a strategy and implement that strategy to get those candidates and nothing else no matter how much sort of dressing up around the issue that happens, nothing will make that hiring manager happy to use us. It doesn't matter what you give them if they need IT people and we can't find them they're not going to use us. There is not much else apart from that. It can't be because they can't run their business without those people. So we're not interested in bribing clients to use us. That is absolutely not the way we need to operate and not the way that we want to operate and certainly it's not the way we've operated in our history.

No I haven't. I know of clients who've asked other recruiters to take them to the football, the theatre etc... So, I put the question to them: how much work have you been passing to those companies? They say none, but you know I just like to go to these events. So in my mind from a client's perspective, that's fantastic. But, it's not in our budget to do it. And unless we're able to get something back from it, I'd find it hard to know how I could do that...

I think that's the basis of how to influence people pretty much because there must be some benefit in it for them to make them conform to what you want. I think that kind of relates to one of the previous questions that was about sort of gifts and associations and that's the one. I think that's part of it in terms of the benefit to them. In terms of I guess making their job a lot easier there are a lot of tasks that we take away from HR managers, recruitment managers that are possibly part of their role and we provide that service to them as a benefit.

I'd say that we do that. It would be like some sort of presentation on the market about what's happening, what are the turnings, what people are offering, what candidates are looking for. It might be some research that we've done ... just anything that might be of interest. We've got a range of other bits and pieces. Other products and services that we have IP around that can be of interest, around people management, leadership, how you assess people, how you provide feedback. Could be all sorts of things. So workshops for people on committees. Sometimes we include that in the solution, sometimes we don't. How about we do this, helping them define the role ... more formalised way. Some workshop, doing some external research or mapping on their competitors. It might be something that's not included in the service, basically.

Coalitions

Yeah I think so. A good example is we've got our people business solutions that are traditional and for one of our clients there were a number of managers that were going outside the solution. They knew they were a part of the [Unclear] but they weren't part of the solution. We over time were made aware of what was happening so we rang HR and said look we need you to help us to manage this hiring manager. We need you to tell him that they can't do what they are doing and they have to come through the recruitment centre....[Interviewer: Is this a type of coalition?] Yeah it's a coalition. Striking up that coalition with that individual has meant that manager now follows the process because they've been told when they go to her that they can't do this and that they should be doing it through recruitment, I can't be seen to help you unless you go through the right channels.

Very much so certainly in terms of our network of recruitment agencies we have a much stronger bargaining position as members of a coalition. I think the smaller recruitment agencies that are part of the coalition would have no hope in influencing the behaviour of anybody [Interviewer: So you are saying that size matters?] Very much so and I think also reputation matters which can be based on size but it can also be based on the history with the client. It's much better to have a coalition of people who have a history of 70 roles rather than one individual person who's had a history of two roles with the client if you get my drift.

We use the HR sponsor to help us in some situations. But, I mean common sense has to prevail in these things. If that person [the client manager] wants specialised staff and we can't find them then the HR sponsor no matter how supportive they are of us is not going to direct that hiring manager to use us if we can't come up with the candidates because it means then that hiring manager can't run their business. So it's not going to happen.

Yes. One is probably with much smaller, specialised recruitment firms. Then also with contacts who are the larger ones. Multinationals who've got over 400 or so people in their organisation. [Interviewer: Can you give me an example of such a coalition?]. Yes, here is one. The client didn't believe that we had the experience, expertise or quality of candidates to supply to them. And we agreed with them that perhaps we didn't, but that we had access to resources outside Recruiter Z that could do that. They were like, you show me the credibility, show me you can do that and I'll consider using you. We went to the specialist firm, had a talk to them saying that they can have access to this client through us. They could have gone around us and pitched to the client to try and get in with them, but we didn't say who the contact was, we just said overall who the client organisation was. We explained to them that there were particular roles that we knew they would be able to fill if they had quality candidates there. They showed us that they did. We then went to the client through our format, showed them the quality candidates. And they were like great, I can use you now because you have the top candidate I'm looking for.

Upward Appeals

It was actually at Corporation X. They have a very stringent structure around the way they interview. All hiring managers need to [unclear] interview anyone coming through the process. There was an area that I looked after there in interviewing. The quality of the process was weak, so really they were just relying on my interview to dig out any weaknesses...So I had to speak to the GM, cause no matter how many times I asked them to use the templates provided – you

Oh look it happens a lot. If we use the same organisation we had a client in Queensland, a new HR manager who didn't want to use us for whatever reason but that particular one she was just hardnosed and didn't want to use us even though there was a contract in place and so we went above her head on several occasions and she was brought back into line but that didn't keep her there. She still found ways of squeezing out...

Yeah definitely, I think once the senior manager gets involved the under manager starts to conform...so, on the whole yes....I think it increases compliance to the rules but as I was sort of talking about earlier it doesn't necessarily I guess you're sort of not talking about relationships but I don't think it necessarily provides a basis for an ongoing relationship and therefore further interaction with them...

No, not directly. I suppose sometimes I have gone to the HR business partners and informed them, because they're in a better position to go in...

know, you must use the behavioural interview templates – they just wouldn't use them. So I had to go to the GM. His mandate was for better recruitment process, because they had too much turnover. I had to say look four or five of your managers are not following process and using the behavioural interview questions. And in fact they're probably not up to scratch in terms of the interview itself. They need some training. I don't know if they even realised I had raised the issue. We addressed it as a group that we were going to upscale on interview techniques, and get more serious about behavioural interviewing. And in turn, that meant that three or four or five line managers were included in that, and started using behaviour interviewing more. It was well handled by the GM, that area. Didn't address them individually and say look, someone in the team has told me you're not necessarily using the template. So it was handled well... I'd go up a level if the circumstances were right, and I had a good enough relationship with the next level up. And I did in that instance.

1. List of generic influence strategies (Yukl & Falbe, 1990)